

Corner: UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative

New Features Under Preparation

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UNEP LCM Industry Roundtable – First information meeting during Barcelona LCM conference

Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel, former UNEP Assistant Executive Director and former director of UNEP DTIE, announced, at her opening speech at the LCM conference in Barcelona on 5 September, the idea of launching an UNEP LCM Industry Roundtable as part of the Life Cycle Initiative. She put this roundtable in the series of UNEP industry initiatives such as the UNEP Finance Initiative, the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI), and the Tour Operator Initiative (TOI) that she has helped to create when she was associated with UNEP.

Life Cycle Management (LCM) is at an early stage of its development. It is therefore critical to solicit broad input from stakeholders active in the field, as well as to reach out to interested stakeholders. Industry is a key stakeholder with interest in implementing LCM concepts. Industry is also a critical player in further disseminating LCM practice and in providing illustrative case examples. Business companies are increasingly interested in integrating life cycle approaches in their strategic decision-making structures. In particular, this interest stems from European efforts to foster product responsibility. Therefore, business companies in the United States have an interest in better understanding and managing their products from a life cycle approach. LCM, the integration of life cycle approaches into corporate business practices, however, does not follow a coordinated or standardized format.

Several individual companies have brought up the idea of forming an industry roundtable focused on creating business strategies for resource efficiencies, managing product responsibilities and developing partnerships, because they do not feel themselves represented in the currently existing task forces. The participants of such a roundtable would have the chance to exchange their views with LCM experts from other industry sectors. They would not only serve as dissemination and case-study partners, but will contribute to the LCM programme of the initiative with resources and help in developing deliverables. Proposed functions of the UNEP LCM Industry Roundtable are:

- Platform for open discussions among industrial companies, exchange of experiences, and sharing of best practice.
- Advice on the development of LCM principles and strategies.
- Presentation and evaluation of case studies relevant to LCM and the Life Cycle Initiative.
- Input into the LCM programme by providing examples and review of deliverables.
- Input from LCM programme and support dissemination and practical implementation within the partner organizations and their respective value chains.

Discussions about the expected contribution from industry and the organisational structure are ongoing. Future developments will show whether this idea, presented by Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel at the LCM conference, can be realised.

Decentralized Life Cycle Initiative website

UNEP is currently funding a project that will allow the Life Cycle Initiative to dramatically improve its website by using the decentralized web software ESTIS that was developed by UNEP.

A Life Cycle Initiative web site powered by ESTIS will be characterized by decentralised intervention points and different layers of access and will make available transparent information on the functioning of the initiative and links to important sources of information on knowledge related to life cycle approaches for changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, specifically:

- Life Cycle Inventory data,
- Life Cycle Impact Assessment methods,
- Product Life Cycle Management applications.

The programmes and task forces of the initiative as well as regional or national life-cycle networks associated to the initiative will operate their own web pages. This is to considerably increase the autonomy of the active members in the initiative, and to strengthen the exchange of information and knowledge among the experts in various topic areas and different regions at the international level. - This implies that the pathways to meet the required information exchange within the Life Cycle Initiative will be improved.

FIDAREC (www.fidarec.org)

The «1^{er} Forum International de la Dynamique territoriale Achats Responsables et Eco-Conception des produits et des services» will be organized at Divonne-les-Bains (France), close to Geneva (Switzerland), 29 and 30 September 2005.

LCA/ LCM training at Costa Rica meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production

The Life Cycle Initiative was asked to provide LCA/LCM training sessions at the second international review meeting of the Marrakech process on the ten-year framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production, held in St. Jose, Costa Rica, September 4–8, 2005 (see also p. 376). The meeting was attended by around 200 participants (mainly government representatives) from all over the world; each country was invited to nominate only two delegates. The response of the various regions to the Marrakech process was encouraging so far; special attention was given to the life-cycle approach and sustainable procurement policies. This is the first time that the initiative has given special training to government officials.

Life Cycle Initiative Working Group meetings in conjunction with SETAC North America meeting

The next meeting of the Working Groups (WG) of the Life Cycle Initiative and various task forces will take place in conjunction with the SETAC North America meeting in Baltimore, Tuesday afternoon, 15 November 2005. UNEP and SETAC agreed upon organizing these WG meetings on the Tuesday.

UNEP/SETAC Partners

UNEP/SETAC partners in the Life Cycle Initiative are AIST (National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology)/Japan, Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE), American Plastics Council (APC), Plastics Europe, EcoRecycle Victoria, International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), General Motors, Governments of Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Quebec and Switzerland.